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SPECIAL PUBLICATION RELEASE

Revised Special Publication 117

Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California

The State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB), on September 11, 2008, approved the Revised Special Publication SP 117- *Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California*. The revisions include: 1) new ground motion procedures that are consistent with current code, 2) new screening criteria for liquefaction, and 3) improved models for estimating seismically-induced landslide displacements. In addition, many new references have been added in order to improve the “Standard of Practice.”

Prompted by the 1989 Loma Prieta and earlier damaging earthquakes in the state, the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (Act) was enacted on April 1, 1991. The Act directs the Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey (CGS) to identify and map areas prone to liquefaction, earthquake-induced landslides and amplified ground shaking. The purpose of the Act is to minimize loss of life and property through the identification, evaluation and mitigation of seismic hazards. SP 117 provides guidance regarding the responsibilities of local agencies, guidelines for evaluating and mitigating seismic hazards, as well as the text of the Act and accompanying regulations.

The Act also closely resembles program and action elements of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, which only addresses surface fault-rupture hazards. While little can be done other than to avoid surface fault rupture hazard, the hazards of liquefaction and landslides can be mitigated. The new document includes an expanded chapter that summarizes the various methods, including the role of grading practice, in reducing ground-failure hazards.

The Revised SP 117 is available as a free download from the California Geological Survey Website at www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs as well as Seismic Hazard Zone Maps, GIS data and Evaluation Reports. Please contact us at shmp@consrv.ca.gov or (916) 324-7299 if you require additional information.